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Digital Mental Health Use, Training Needs, and Attitudes Toward a Digital Navigator

A Cross-sectional Survey of European Psychologists

Fien Buelens, Nele A.J. De Witte, Miguel Ricou, Jonas Eimontas, David Gosar, Lauri Lukka, Sanda Stanković, Rikke Nørgaard Elster, Lise Haddouk, Juan José Martí-Noguera, Antoni Baena, Marta Csabai, Oliver Favre, Claudette Pretorius, & Tom Van Daele

Perret et al. (2023)

A digital navigator is a member of a mental healthcare team dedicated to assisting both patients and psychologists with the integration of technology, whose duties can include facilitating access to technology, teaching digital literacy skills, supporting online consultations, recommending technological solutions, troubleshooting technical issues, and interpreting clinically relevant data sourced from these technologies.

Current study

Online cross-sectional questionnaire in 13 languages

Data collected between January and June 2025

Eligible participants were psychologists working in Europe, regardless of licensure status

Distribution through social media and newsletters distributed by EFPA, partners and national associations

Analysis: Descriptive statistics, ordinal regressions and thematic analysis with 2 researchers

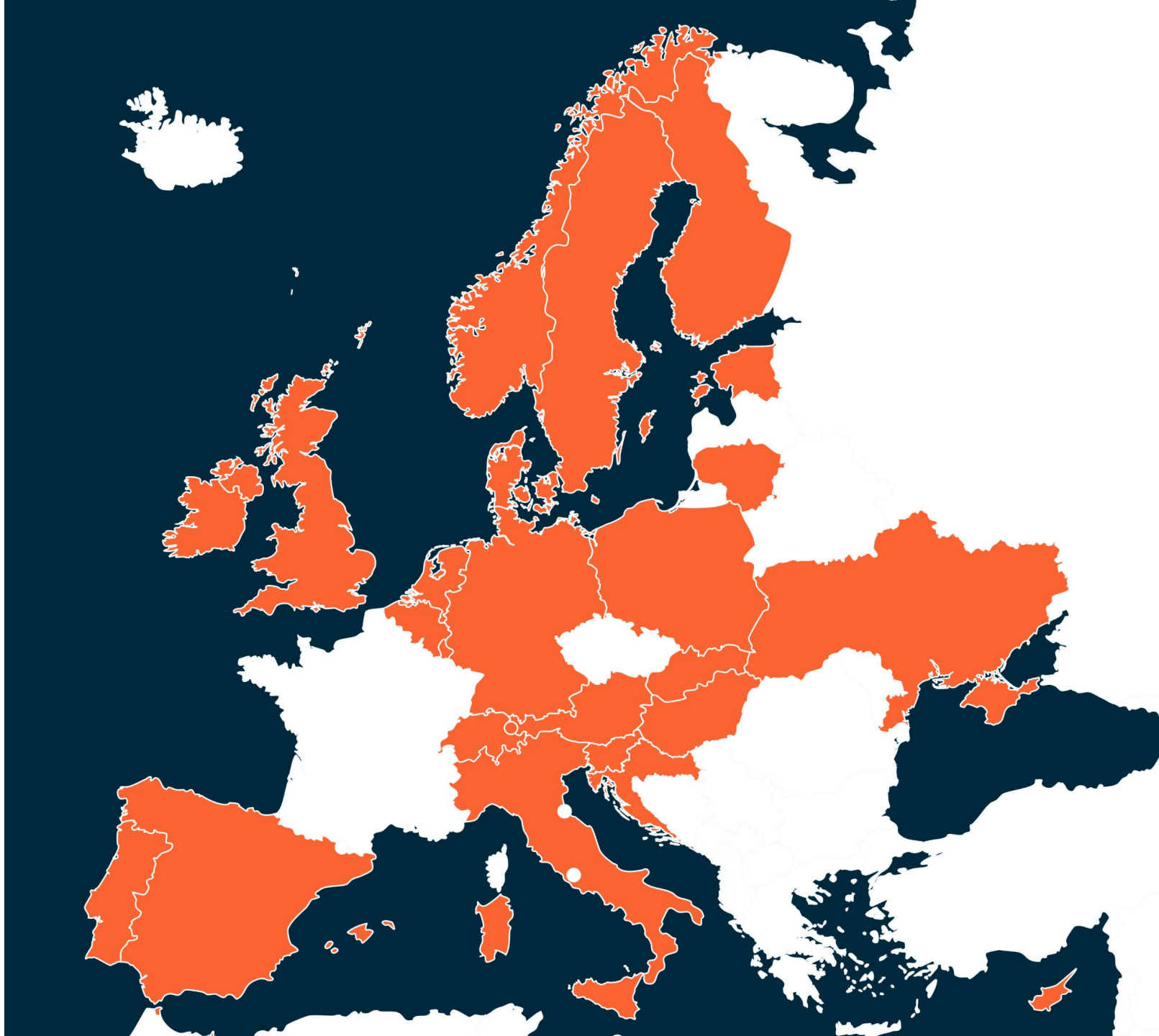
Demographics

883 participants
sample sizes varied between 705 and 883 across items

25 countries with participants

Most came from:

- Switzerland (*n*=215)
- Spain (*n*=134)
- Slovenia (*n*=103)



Demographics



Mean age =
46.40 years
(24-78)



Master = 72.95%
PhD = 17.81%
Bachelor = 9.23%



F = 77.45%
M = 21.48%
X = 1.06%

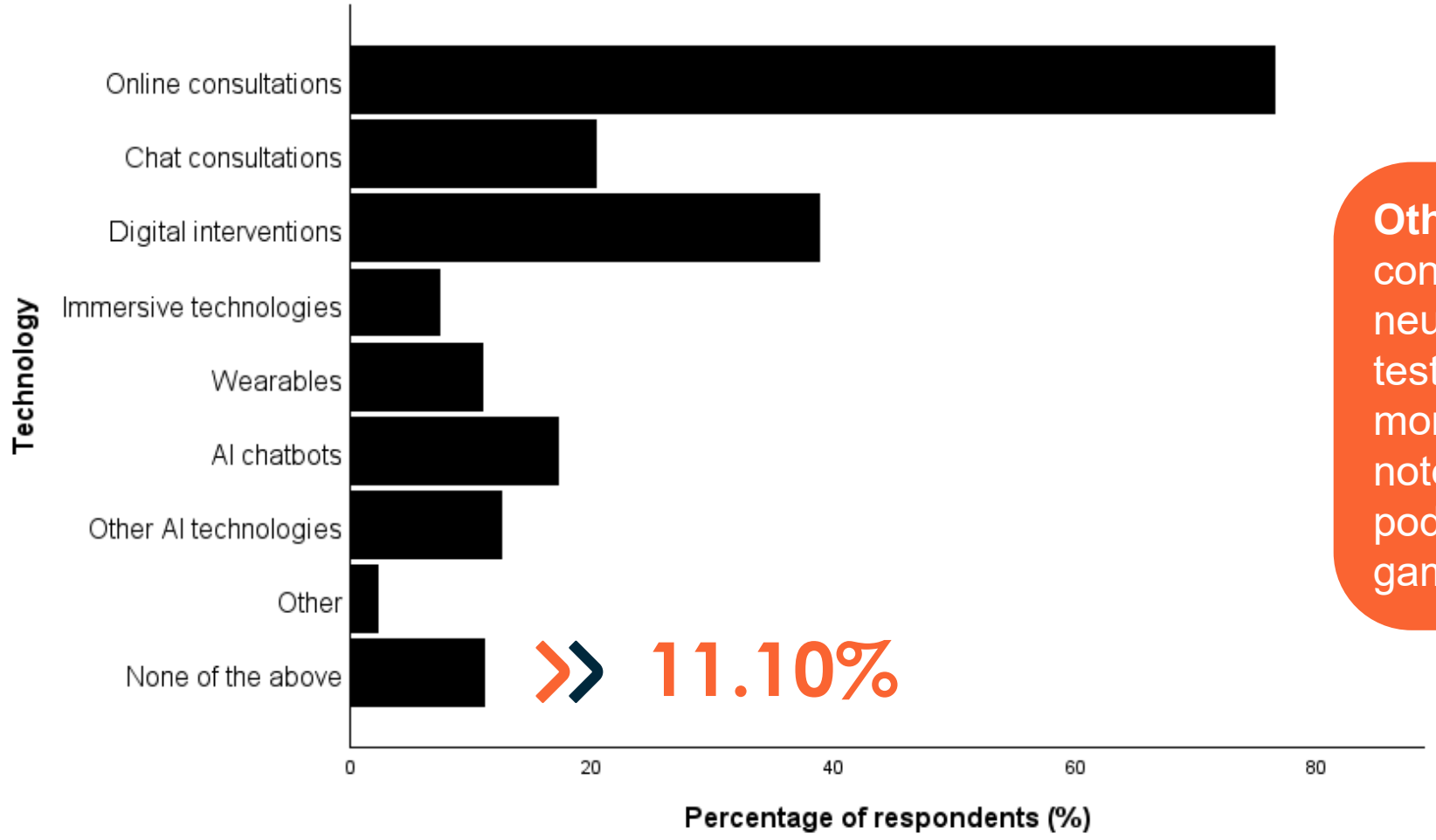


Mean professional
experience =
17.98 years (0-51)



86.82 % licensed
11.72% no licensing system existing

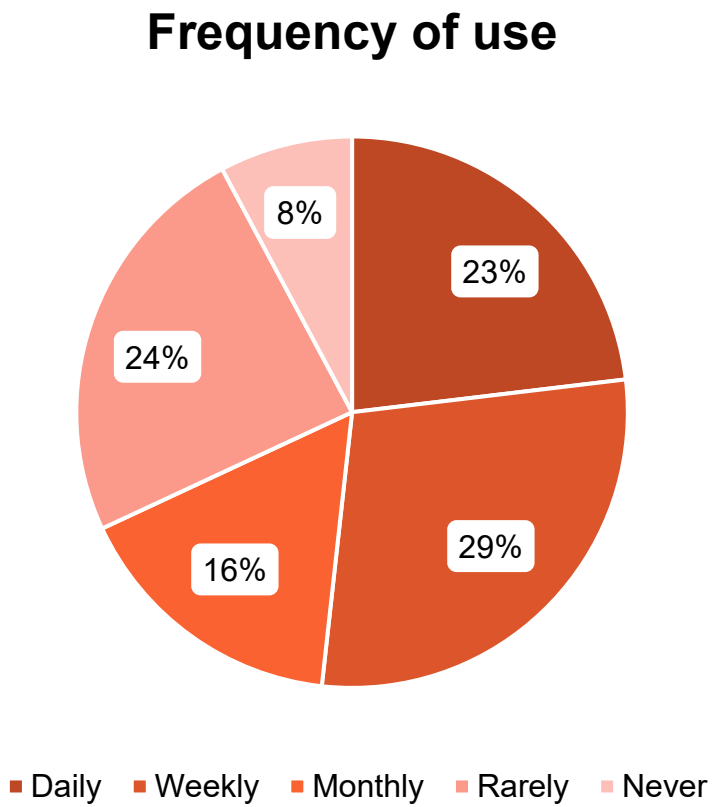
Technology use



» 11.10%

Other: Telephone conversations, neurofeedback, digital testing, process-monitoring tools, digital notes, recordings, podcasts and video games

Technology use



No significant association between frequency and age nor years of professional experience

$\chi^2(1) = 0.13$, $p = .720$, $b = 0.002$, $SE = 0.006$, *95% CI* [-0.009, 0.013]
, $\chi^2(1) = 0.42$, $p = .518$, $b = 0.004$, $SE = 0.006$, *95% CI* [-0.008, 0.015].

Education



During university education

10.51%

From dedicated courses to brief coverage



Postgraduate training

13.97%

By institutions, professional associations, universities, tech providers, in-house programs, online courses or self-directed learning

Implementation

Selection

Evaluating app quality and security

Using specific technologies

55.27%

Lacked digital mental health skills

Building therapeutic aliance

Working with vulnerable populations

Using it for specific purposes

66.50%

Rated training as important

Higher age and more professional experience were associated with lower importance ratings, although effect sizes were very small.

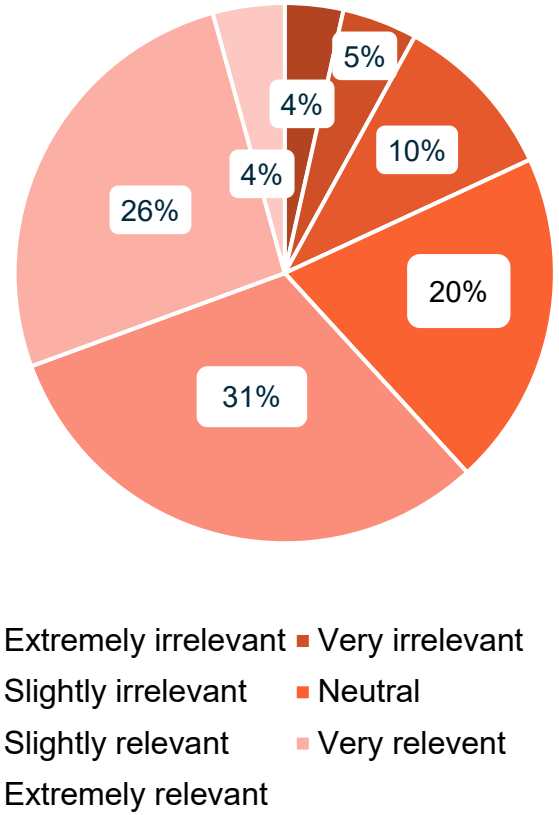
$\chi^2(1) = 4.69$, $p = .030$, $b = -0.012$, $SE = 0.006$, 95% CI [-0.023, -0.001]; $\chi^2(1) = 4.85$, $p = .028$, $b = -0.013$, $SE = 0.006$, 95% CI [-0.025, -0.001]

Digital navigator

89.44%
never received support

If so, from: other departements, external providers (IT), colleagues or supervision

Relevance of digital navigator



Digital navigator

57.77% would rely on a digital navigator

- Clinical support and consultancy
- Expertise is a key benefit
- Staying up to date with new innovations
- Improving efficiency, technical processes and access to care
- Ethical and privacy practices

42.23% would not

- preference face-to-face interventions
- perceived sufficiency of their own digital skills
- lack of perceived relevance of the role
- insufficient knowledge to judge the usefulness of the function
- expressed conditional interest
- high caseload complexity
- limited resources
- privacy concerns

34.65% consider becoming a digital navigator

Conclusion

1. Technology Use is Present, but Uneven
2. Training Gaps are Structural
3. Digital Navigators as Implementation Support

Peer-reviewed publication

Erasmus+ Digital Navigator

THOMAS MORE | UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Questions?

fien.buelens@thomasmore.be
linkedin.com/in/fienbuelens/
digitalmentalhealth.be



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